

Hobbs, NM – On Wednesday, Harry Teague's Energy Jobs for Veterans Act (H.R. 4592) was signed into law. The legislation, endorsed by many New Mexico veterans groups and energy companies, provides on-the-job training, apprenticeship, real experience, and long-term employment in all energy fields to veterans. It was signed into law along with other provisions of the Veterans Benefits Act of 2010.

"This is a common sense law that will address three of our top priorities – putting New Mexicans back to work, working to increase our energy independence through a "Do It All, Do It in New Mexico" approach, and supporting our veterans who risked their lives for this country. This law will ensure that those who fought for their country abroad will be able to continue their work for the security of our country when they return home – by getting a job, and a career, producing our energy right here in America," said Harry Teague, a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. "Our service men and women who fought enemies funded by foreign oil purchased with American dollars can now come home to a job and continue their work for our national security – this time with a career in the energy industry that cannot be shipped overseas. "

The program will fund state-based programs that will reimburse energy employers for apprenticeship and on-the-job training provided to veterans. The program would be available to employers across multiple energy fields, including oil and gas, energy efficient building, construction and retrofits, renewable electric power, biofuel production, energy efficiency assessment, and nuclear power. Unlike other employment training programs for veterans, the Energy Jobs for Veterans Act ensures that a veteran has the security of employment while he or she receives training and apprenticeship. Eligible employers are offered a strong incentive to hire a veteran because companies will be reimbursed for his or her training.

The bill was introduced following a roundtable discussion with New Mexico veterans that Harry

Teague held in Valencia County focused on expanding job opportunities for Veterans. The legislation [quickly garnered praise from across industry and veterans organizations](#), receiving the endorsement of PNM Resources, Sapphire Energy, Louisiana Energy Services (LES), Armstrong Energy Corporation, Center for Excellence in Hazardous Materials Management (CEHMM), Las Cruces Green Chamber, New Mexico Department of Disabled American Veterans (NMDAV), New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (NMDVS), New Mexico Department of Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Marine Corps League of New Mexico.

"The men and women who proudly and bravely served our country deserve all of the opportunities possible when it comes to job creation. This program will give New Mexico's veterans the critical training and resources necessary to help them join our growing energy industry and combat the high unemployment rate in our veteran community," said NMDVS Secretary John Garcia.

A Department of Labor report from June shows the unemployment rate for young Iraq and Afghanistan veterans at 11.5 percent. New male veterans face an unemployment of 10.8 percent, compared with 15.5 percent for new female veterans.

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